

**Amendments to the Claims:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the instant application:

**Listing of Claims:**

1. (Currently Amended) A method for storing electronic documents comprising the steps of:

associating at least one electronic document ~~and a digital seal using~~ stored in a network storage system with an associative object represented by a digital seal, wherein [[the]] the digital seal uniquely corresponds to an image of a seal, stamp, or tape that is visually displayable within a user interface;

displaying said image within said user interface;

moving the displayed image within the user interface as said digital seal is associated with said at least one electronic document so as to visually simulate said image being affixed to said at least one electronic document;

generating an audio signal when the displayed image is moved adjacent to or over another image within the user interface representative of the at least one electronic document so as to audibly simulate said image being affixed to said at least one electronic document;

storing ~~at least one~~ or more metadata attributes ~~as a characteristic related to~~ for said associative object, said metadata attributes specifying one or more one characteristics related to said associative object; and

responsive to said document being associated with said associative object, modifying a ~~logical~~ storage location ~~characteristic in~~ said network storage system of said at least one electronic document based on at least one of said stored metadata attributes, wherein said modified storage location is at least one among a new physical storage location and a new logical storage location in said network storage system.

2. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein said associative object is said digital seal.

3. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of:  
presenting at least one multimedia object within said user interface, wherein said multimedia object is a user selectable representation for said associative object.

4. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, ~~said modifying step further comprising the step of: requiring an~~ wherein at least one of said characteristics comprises one or more authorization codes ~~previously specified within one of said metadata attributes~~ required before allowing said at least one electronic document to be retrieved.

5. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 4, wherein at least one of said authorization codes is valid for a first user and ~~wherein said authorization code is~~ invalid for a second user.

6. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of:  
associating a second digital seal with one of said at least one electronic document using a second associative object.

7. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 6, wherein said digital seal includes a first authorization code, and wherein said second digital seal includes a second authorization code, said method further comprising the step of:  
requiring said first authorization code and said second authorization code before said one of at least one electronic document can be retrieved.

8. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, further comprising the steps of:

establishing a first authorization code for said digital seal, wherein said first authorization code is associated with a first image;

encoding said at least one associated electronic documents with a second authorization code associated with a second image; and,

decoding said at least one associated electronic documents using at least in part said first image.

9. – 21. (Cancelled)

22. (Currently Amended) A ~~machine~~ computer-readable storage having stored thereon, a computer program having a plurality of code sections, said code sections executable by a ~~machine~~ computer for causing the ~~machine~~ computer to perform the steps of:

associating at least one electronic document ~~and a digital seal using~~ stored in a network storage system with an associative object represented by a digital seal, wherein the digital seal uniquely corresponds to an image of a seal, stamp, or tape that is visually displayable within a user interface;

displaying said image within said user interface;

moving the displayed image within the user interface as said digital seal is associated with said at least one electronic document so as to visually simulate said image being affixed to said at least one electronic document;

generating an audio signal when the displayed image is moved adjacent to or over another image within the user interface representative of the at least one electronic document so as to audibly simulate said image being affixed to said at least one electronic document;

storing ~~at least one or more~~ metadata attributes as a characteristic related to for said associative object, said metadata attributes specifying one or more one characteristics related to said associative object; and

responsive to said document being associated with said associative object,  
modifying a ~~logical~~ storage location ~~characteristic in~~ said network storage system of said  
at least one electronic document based on at least one of said stored metadata attributes,  
wherein said modified storage location is at least one among a new physical storage  
location and a new logical storage location in said network storage system.

23. (Currently Amended) The ~~machine~~ computer-readable storage of claim 22,  
wherein said associative object is said digital seal.

24. (Currently Amended) The ~~machine~~ computer-readable storage of claim 22,  
further comprising the step of:

presenting at least one multimedia object within said user interface, wherein said  
multimedia object is a user selectable representation for said associative object.

25. (Currently Amended) The ~~machine~~ computer-readable storage of claim 22,  
~~said modifying step further comprising the step of: requiring an~~ wherein at least one of  
said characteristics comprises one or more authorization codes ~~previously specified~~  
~~within one of said metadata attributes~~ required before allowing said at least one electronic  
document to be retrieved.

26. (Currently Amended) The ~~machine~~ computer-readable storage of claim 25,  
wherein at least one of said authorization codes is valid for a first user and ~~wherein said~~  
~~authorization code is invalid for a second user.~~

27. (Currently Amended) The ~~machine~~ computer-readable storage of claim 22,  
further comprising the step of:

associating a second digital seal with one of said at least one electronic document  
using a second associative object.

28. (Currently Amended) The ~~machine~~ computer-readable storage of claim 27, wherein said digital seal includes a first authorization code, and wherein said second digital seal includes a second authorization code, said machine readable storage further comprising the step of:

requiring said first authorization code and said second authorization code before said one of at least one electronic document can be retrieved.

29. (Currently Amended) The ~~machine~~ computer-readable storage of claim 22, further comprising the steps of:

establishing a first authorization code for said digital seal, wherein said first authorization code is associated with a first image;

encoding said at least one associated electronic documents with a second authorization code associated with a second image; and,

decoding said at least one associated electronic documents using at least in part said first image.

30. – 43. (Cancelled)

44. (New) The method of claim 1, wherein at least one of said characteristics comprises biometric data associated with at least one user.

45. (New) The method of claim 4, wherein at least one appearance attribute of said digital seal is altered in response to one of said required authorization codes being received and validated.

46. (New) The computer-readable storage of claim 22, wherein at least one of said characteristics comprises biometric data associated with at least one user.

47. (New) The computer-readable storage of claim 25, wherein at least one appearance attribute of said digital seal is altered in response to one of said required authorization codes being received and validated.